

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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O 191526Z DEC 75 ZFF6

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9444

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 8037

EXDIS-HANDLE AS NODIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - PARAGRAPH 5.

FOR ATHERTON ONLY FROM TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS

SUBJ: CURRENT ISSUES IN U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS

1. TEL AVIV 8023 ADDRESSED RECENT EVENTS IN ISRAEL AS WELL AS THE QUESTION OF THE STANDING OF RABIN AND ALLON AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO ONE ANOTHER. IN THIS MESSAGE I WANT TO ENUMERATE SOME CURRENT ISSUES, WHICH I HAVE DISCUSSED WITH RABIN OR ALLON AND WHICH MAY ARISE IN YOUR TALKS. YOU ARE, OF COURSE, FAMILIAR WITH THEM BUT I DO THIS TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORY.

2. UNSC DEBATE ON JANUARY 12. RABIN HAS INDICATED THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THIS DEBATE, BUT ALLON HAS NOT BEEN SO CATEGORIC. I THINK IT WOULD HELP IF YOU PUT TO THEM AGAIN WHY WE THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL THAT THEY NOT BOYCOTT THE PROCEEDINGS. INTER ALIA, THEIR DOING SO MAY HAVE THE UNWANTED EFFECT OF HIGHLIGHTING PLO PARTICIPATION.

3. GOLAN SETTLEMENTS. BOTH RABIN AND ALLON ARE AWARE THAT WE DO NOT FAVOR FURTHER SETTLEMENTS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS OR, FOR THAT MATTER,

ON THE WEST BANK. THEY FEEL A GOOD DEAL OF DOMESTIC HEAT ON THIS
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ISSUE, BUT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO SPEAK PLAINLY (AND SECRETLY) TO THEM

OTHERWISE, THE EASIEST THING FOR THEM WOULD BE TO GIVE IN TO THOSE PUSHING FOR NEW SETTLEMENTS. YOU SHOULD BEAR IN MIND A CERTAIN ASPECT OF THIS PROBLEM I DISCUSSED ONLY WITH RABIN AND ALLON IS NOT PRIVY TO THIS.

4. OIL DRILLING IN THE GULF OF SUEZ. SINCE AUGUST THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL INSTANCES WHEN ISRAELI NAVAL VESSELS HAVE HARASSED AMERICAN OIL DRILLING SHIPS IN THE GULF OF SUEZ. WE HAVE NOT LEANED HEAVILY ON THE ISRAELIS IN THIS REGARD, ALTHOUGH UNDER INSTRUCTION I RECENTLY TOLD ALLON THAT WE DID NOT ACCEPT THEIR POSITION. WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THEIR RIGHT TO DRAW A LINE IN THE GULF NOR, IN FACT, DO WE RECOGNIZE THEIR RIGHT TO DRILL ON OR OFF SHORE IN THE SINAI.

5. CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO MILITARY ACTION. THE GOI IS AWARE, MOST RECENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH LEBANON, THAT WE RESENT THEIR CARRYING OUT MAJOR RETALIATORY STRIKES WHICH CAUSE CIVILIAN LOSS OF LIFE AND THEN FORCE US TO COME TO THEIR DEFENSE IN THE UN. THE POINT HAS BEEN MADE TO THEM THAT EACH SUCH INCIDENT MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR US, NOT ONLY AT THE UN BUT ALSO WITH OUR DOMESTIC PUBLIC OPINION. THEY UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERN--ALTHOUGH I AM NOT SURE IT WILL AFFECT THEIR ACTIONS.

6. AID BILL. THE GOI IS COUNTING VERY HEAVILY ON GETTING THE "PROMISED" \$2.3 BILLION THIS YEAR. RECENT TESTIMONY BY ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES THAT ISRAEL IS ALREADY FAR STRONGER THAN ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS HAS TOUCHED A SENSITIVE NERVE HERE. RABIN, AS A POLITICIAN, HAS NOT BEEN WILLING TO FACE (IN PUBLIC AT LEAST) THE PROBLEM OF WHAT HE WOULD HAVE TO DO IF THE DESIRED AMOUNT WAS NOT FORTHCOMING. RECENTLY ANNOUNCED BUDGET IS BASED ON ASSUMPTION \$2.3 BILLION OR CLOSE TO IT WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM U.S. IF THERE WERE A SIGNIFICANT SHORTFALL, HE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PAINFUL DECISIONS LEADING TO REAL AUSTERITY AND "BELT-TIGHTENING". HE WILL THUS WANT TO KNOW HOW THE AID BILL IS FARING IN CONGRESS.

7. THE FENCE. ALLON HAS PROMISED ME THAT THE FENCE WHICH IS BLOCKING THE JORDAN ROAD WILL BE REMOVED. PERHAPS QUIET ACTION HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN TO THAT EFFECT, BUT WE ARE NOT YET AWARE OF IT. I DO NOT THINK YOU NEED RAISE THIS ISSUE, BUT IT
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MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO HAVE IN MIND AS A POSSIBLE TRADE-OFF FOR THE NEXT ONE.

8. ARMS TO PANAMA. THE ISRAELIS ARE ANXIOUS TO CONSUMMATE THE DEAL TO SELL CERTAIN ARMS TO PANAMA, AT PRESENT MAINLY SMALL NAVAL CRAFT (SWIFTBOATS). WE HAVE OWED THEM AN ANSWER ON THIS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, CAT-B, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, POLITICAL SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TELAV08037
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P850004-0378, D750442-0159
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751226/aaaaawqc.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 AUG 2003 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <02 DEC 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CURRENT ISSUES IN US - ISRAELI RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, PREL, IS, US, XF, (ALLON, YIGAL), (RABIN, YITZHAK)
To: JIDDA CAIRO STATE SS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006